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LETTER DATED 17 DECEMBER 1998 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF TOGO TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of the Declaration of a Moratorium on the Importation, Exportation and Manufacture of Small Arms and Light Weapons in West Africa adopted and signed in Abuja on 31 October 1998 by the Heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of West African States.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Roland KPOTSRA

ANNEX

Declaration of a Moratorium on the Importation, Exportation and Manufacture of Small Arms and Light Weapons in West Africa

We, Heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS),

Considering the purposes and principles of the Revised Treaty of ECOWAS and of those of the Charter of the Organization of African Unity and the United Nations,

Considering that the traffic in small arms and light weapons constitutes a destabilizing factor for ECOWAS member States and a threat to the peace and security of our peoples,

Considering the resolutions of the United Nations conference on conflict prevention, disarmament and development held in Bamako in November 1996,

Considering the guidelines of the fourth extraordinary meeting of the Authority of ECOWAS Heads of State and Government held in Lome on 17 December 1997 concerning the establishment of a Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution and the maintenance of peace and security in the sub-region,

Considering the recommendations of the Conference of ECOWAS Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Defence, the Interior and Security held in Yamoussoukro on 11 and 12 March 1998,

Considering the renewed commitment of ECOWAS member States at the Oslo Conference (1 and 2 April 1998) and the international community's support for the proposed moratorium on small arms and light weapons in West Africa,

Considering the results of the meeting of Ministers of Defence, the Interior and Security and those of the meeting of Ministers for Foreign Affairs, held in Banjul from 23 to 24 July 1998 and in Abuja from 26 to 29 October 1998, respectively, and endorsed by us at Abuja on 31 October 1998,

Considering the repeated appeals from the United Nations for disarmament in West Africa, as mentioned in the relevant resolutions of the fiftieth, fifty-first and fifty-second sessions of the General Assembly,

Considering the highly positive attitude of the member States of the Wassenaar Arrangement on Export Controls for Conventional Arms and Dual-Use Goods and Technologies and other arms manufacturers with respect to the proposal for a moratorium on small arms and light weapons in West Africa,

Solemnly and with one voice declare a moratorium on the importation, exportation and manufacture of small arms and light weapons in the member States of the Economic Community of West African States to take effect as from 1 November 1998 for a renewable period of three (3) years,

Instruct the Executive Secretary of ECOWAS, in collaboration with the United Nations system, to convene a meeting of Ministers for Foreign Affairs and experts with a view to the establishment of the operational framework for the measures accompanying the moratorium in the context of the Programme for Coordination and Assistance for Security and Development (PCASED),

Desirous of ensuring the success of the moratorium:

(a) We request the assistance of the Organization of African Unity, the United Nations and the international community in implementing the Programme for Coordination and Assistance for Security and Development;

(b) Instruct the Executive Secretary to convene, in collaboration with PCASED, a conference of Ministers for Foreign Affairs to evaluate the moratorium at the end of the initial period of three (3) years;

In witness whereof, we, Heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of West African States, have signed the present Declaration.

Done at Abuja on 31 October 1998 in a single original copy in French and English, both texts being equally authentic.

(Signed) H.E. Mathieu KEREKOU
President of the Republic of Benin

(Signed) H.E. Ablassé OUEDRAOGO
Minister for Foreign Affairs,
for the President of Burkina Faso,
Chairman of the Council of
Ministers and by order

(Signed) H.E. Carlos Alberto Wahanon de Carvalho VEIGA
Prime Minister and Head of Government of the Republic of Cape Verde

(Signed) H.E. Henri Konan BEDIE
President of the Republic of
Côte d'Ivoire

(Signed) H.E. Col. Yahya A.J.J. JAMMEH
President of the Republic
of the Gambia

(Signed) H.E. Flight Lieutenant
Jerry John RAWLINGS
President of the Republic of Ghana

(Signed) H.E. General Lansana CONTE
President of the Republic of Guinea

(Signed) H.E. Joao Bernardo VIEIRA
President of the Republic of
Guinea-Bissau

(Signed) H.E. Charles TAYLOR
President of the Republic of Liberia

(Signed) H.E. Alpha Oumar KONARE
President of the Republic of Mali

(Signed) H.E. Mohamed A. Ould MOÏNE
Ambassador, for the President of
the Islamic Republic of Mauritania
and by order

(Signed) H.E. Ibrahim Mainassara BARE
President of the Republic
of the Niger

(Signed) H.E. General Abdulsalami ABUBAKAR
Head of State,
Commander-in-Chief of the
Armed Forces of the
Federal Republic of Nigeria

(Signed) H.E. Abdou DIOUF
President of the Republic of Senegal

(Signed) H.E. Alhaji Ahmad Tejan KABBAH
President of the Republic
of Sierra Leone

(Signed) H.E. Gnassingbé EYADEMA
President of the Togolese Republic